

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-24 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 11, 14, 15, and 20 are independent.

By this Amendment, the specification has been amended to correct minor typographical errors, claims 8-24 have been added, and claims 1-3, 5, and 6 have been amended.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Drawings

Since no objection has been received, Applicants assumes that the drawings are acceptable and that no further action is necessary. Confirmation thereof in the next Office Action is respectfully requested.

Specification Amendments

Applicants have amended the specification in order correct minor typographical errors to place the specification in better form.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claim 2 because it does not further limit claim 1. In order to overcome this objection, Applicants have amended claim 1 to positively recite a siphon structural feature in order to correct the basis for the objection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakamura in view of Morton. Further, claims 3-7 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakamura in view of Morton and further in view of De Loach. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steam generator for a laundry machine including "a container provided with a water supply port to supply water and a steam exhaustion port to exhaust steam", "a heater to heat the water supplied into the container", and "a drain unit having an upper inlet to drain water inside of the container to a level below the upper inlet." Applicants respectfully submit that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Nakamura, Morton, and De Loach.

The Examiner states that Nakamura fails to disclose a drain, but that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Nakamura with a drain pipe taught by Morton. The Examiner further asserts that Morton's drain pipe operates like a siphon because water flows from an upper opening to a lower opening.

Applicants respectfully submit that Morton fails to teach a drain unit as amended. Specifically independent claim 1 requires that the drain unit has "an upper inlet to drain water inside of the container to a level below the upper inlet." At best, pipe 34 is a water-level limiter and therefore it is not configured to drain water inside a container to a level below the upper inlet.

Therefore, even if one or ordinary skill in the art were motivated to combine Nakamura and Morton, the hypothetical combination would fail to teach all features of independent claim 1.

De Loach was cited for teaching a drain cap to further modify the combination of Nakamura and Morton. However, this does not correct the deficiencies identified above with respect to Nakamura and Morton and therefore, independent claim 1 should be allowed.

Claims 8-24

Claims 8-24 have been added for the Examiner's consideration.

Applicants submit that claims 8-10 depend from independent claim 1, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 1, which is believed to be allowable.

In addition, claims 8-10 recite further limitations which are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Independent claim 11 recites a combination of elements in a laundry machine including a steam generator having "a container provided with a water supply port to supply water and a steam exhaustion port to exhaust steam", "a heater to heat the water supplied into the container", "a drain unit having an inlet to drain water inside of the container to a level below a water supply level", and "means for spraying the exhausted steam directly into the laundry drum." Applicants respectfully submits that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record.

Independent claim 14 recites a combination of elements in a laundry machine including a steam generator having "a container provided with a water supply port to supply water and a steam exhaustion port to exhaust steam", "a heater to heat the water supplied into the container", "a drain unit configured to drain substantially all the water inside of the container", and "means for spraying the exhausted steam directly into the laundry drum." Applicants respectfully submits that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 14 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record.

Independent claim 15 recites a combination of steps in an operating method for a laundry machine including "supplying water into a container", "heating the water to produce steam", "exhausting steam through a first outlet of the container to a drum of the laundry machine", and "draining water from the container through a second outlet of the container after heating the

steam.” Applicants respectfully submits that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 15 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record.

Independent claim 20 recites a combination of steps in an operating method for a laundry machine including “supplying water into a container”, “heating the water to produce steam”, “exhausting steam through a first outlet of the container to a drum of the laundry machine”, “supplying additional water into the container”, and “draining water from the container through a second outlet of the container after heating the steam.” Applicants respectfully submits that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 20 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record.

Consideration and allowance of claims 8-24 are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot.

Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chad D. Wells, Registration No. 50,875, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

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Amendment dated July 5, 2007
Reply to Office Action of January 5, 2007

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: July 5, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By James T. Eller, Jr.

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